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Statement submitted by Associazione Amici dei Bambini, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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Statement

Nowadays, is it becoming harder for young people to be integrated in the work environment, especially in developing countries. A particular target that is experiencing this problem is the one of "care leavers". These are young people without a stable family who are leaving or have recently left alternative care or residential placements after reaching a legally set age (usually 18 years of age). The number of "care leavers" is constantly rising, a clear sign of the increasing number of children growing up in alternative care. Transnational research conducted in Europe confirms this tendency.[1] By supporting this particular group, the following Millennium Development Goals will be addressed: eradicating extreme poverty and hunger; achieving universal primary education; promoting gender equality and empowerment of women; reducing child mortality; and developing a global partnership for development.

Recommendations:

- End poverty and hunger: encourage institutions to enforce services and policies that guarantee support for young care leavers after leaving the child protection system (life skills training, psycho-social support, home maintenance, job searching); launch public campaigns seeking to eliminate discrimination and stigmas against care leavers; promote funds for programmes that aim to support social integration for young care leavers (e.g., housing programmes).
- Universal education: undertake systematic reform of training and education programmes for care leavers and young people in general; promote access to university education.
- Global partnerships: encourage partnerships with the private sector to train and employ young people; support civil society organizations aiming at creating a network of services for care leavers in order to strengthen the role of civil society.
- Best practices: Amici dei Bambini's support in creating and running the activities of a local care leavers group in Kenya (Kenya Network of Care Leavers).
- Gender equality: provide special support to young girls leaving care at risk of sexual exploitation, early pregnancy and gender discrimination.
- Child health: guarantee free access to health care to care leavers.

Additional recommendations:

- Each State to implement the 2009 General Assembly resolution containing the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children (in particular, section VII.E "Support for after care").
- To support family reintegration, family support and strengthening, foster families, national and inter-country adoption as alternatives to

[1] See Amici dei Bambini, *Young Care Leavers and Social Inclusion: Guidelines: Life after Institutional Care* (2009); Eurochild, *Children in Alternative Care, National Surveys* (2010).

institutionalization in order to reach a stable family solution for children without parental care and reduce the number of care leavers.

- To support the production and use of research providing technical and practical information about the target.